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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI IMMEDIATE 3720

RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA IMMEDIATE 2961

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RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 002838

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FBI FOR ARTHUR CUMMINGS AND MICHAEL HEIMBACH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/04/2018

TAGS: PREL PTER PINR PGOV IN

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES NSA NARAYANAN TO CONSIDER
PRACTICAL STEPS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION

REF: A. KOLKATA 301

1B. KOLKATA 302

1C. NEW DELHI 2541

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Classified By: Ambassador David Mulford. Reasons: 1.4(B, D).

11. (C) Summary: The Ambassador sought to bolster U.S.-Indian counter-terrorism cooperation in a November 3 meeting with National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan. Pointing to the string of terrorist attacks in India this past year, the Ambassador said that they were intensifying and increasingly appeared to be home-grown. He suggested that practical steps, perhaps focused on forensic cooperation, would aid the GOI in responding to the growing threat. Narayanan was receptive, but stressed that GOI agencies were skeptical about the benefits of cooperation with U.S. agencies. He said GOI agencies were feeling intense pressure to prevent further attacks and needed cooperation from the U.S. that would help them in this goal. He suggested that GOI agencies could share physical evidence from several recent terrorist attacks for U.S. analysis. If the U.S. could provide unique information that would be useful in preventing future attacks, this would clearly demonstrate the value of closer cooperation. USG agencies at Post will be separately approaching their Indian counterparts to determine next steps to boost practical cooperation. End Summary.

AMBASSADOR: WORRIES OVER WAVE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

12. (C) The Ambassador expressed his condolences following the most recent string of terrorists attacks, which took place in Assam on October 30 (refs A and B), and underlined U.S. willingness to step up counter-terrorism cooperation with India. He noted that attacks were growing in frequency and sophistication and were apparently being planned and executed increasingly by Indians rather than foreigners. The immediate response to each attack had been uncoordinated, with central, state and local officials unable to act effectively. In the case of Assam, some first responders had been stoned by crowds angry about delays in providing help and with the government's inability to protect its citizens. Prosecutions seem to be slow and did not act as a deterrent.

13. (C) The Ambassador stressed that as partners in the fight against terrorism, the U.S. was seeking ways to bolster efforts around the world to fight terrorism. After September 11, the U.S. had made great efforts to improve coordination

among different levels of government in the U.S., had invested money in boosting our technical abilities and had stepped up our cooperation with many other countries that faced terrorists threats. Singling out U.S. forensic capabilities, the Ambassador pointed to our cooperation in post-blast investigations with the U.K., Spain, Sri Lanka and the Maldives among others as a particularly fruitful area.

¶4. (S) The Ambassador regretted that we did not have this sort of relationship with GOI agencies involved in counter-terrorism. We had approached the GOI on several levels on this subject and Narayanan had been briefed in the U.S. about U.S. domestic efforts to counter terrorism; the Ambassador had met with the Home Secretary recently to offer more practical cooperation. (See reftel C.) While the Ambassador recognized there had been much talk about increased cooperation and intelligence was being shared, these efforts did not go far enough; U.S. agencies at post involved in counter-terrorism were unable to work with Indian state and local authorities. The Ambassador told Narayanan that the U.S. was uncertain about the GOI's receptiveness to practical steps to increase cooperation. Among several potential areas to work more closely together, the U.S. was interested in cooperating with Indian agencies to analyze evidence in post-blast investigations -- the U.S. could undertake this analysis quickly and in a way that preserved India's chain of custody over evidence. As a further example, Office of Regional Affairs Minister Counselor Brown added that information published in the newspapers over the weekend regarding cell phone numbers used in the Assam blasts could have been shared with the USG discreetly, which would be able to provide further important information relating to the use of the phone. Brown observed as a general matter that cooperation between the USG and the Intelligence Bureau

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(IB) was not going forward in the way it should to counter terrorist threats.

NARAYANAN CAN YOU SHOW YOU ADD VALUE?

¶4. (C) Narayanan asked that the U.S. understand the institutional constraints he faced in trying to break through resistance to greater cooperation between Indian agencies and the USG in terrorism cases. Warning he would be blunt, he said GOI agencies had not yet been convinced that cooperation with U.S. agencies would be of immediate help in preventing further terrorist attacks. State authorities and the IB were now under tremendous political pressure to show that they could work together to forestall further attacks. Cooperation with the U.S. should be aimed at anticipating the next attack and in finding information that could lead to breaking up terrorist rings and prosecuting their members. What was not helpful now were suggestions about how India should reorganize its institutions to better address the terrorist threat, because those changes -- such as a federal crime and terror-fighting agency -- were politically unrealistic now because the states were overly protective of their legal authority over law enforcement.

¶5. (C) Narayanan said he realized that exchanges of information were useful, but recognized that more needed to be done to achieve operational success. Stressing that he was thinking out loud, he suggested that one way to demonstrate the value of cooperation with the USG would be to share forensic evidence from three or four recent attacks (within the past 18 months) with U.S. agencies which could provide their own analysis of the incidents. He suggested that if the USG could demonstrate that information it develops from this evidence was unique or would be useful in predicting and deterring future attacks, that would go a long way to convincing Indian agencies of the benefits of stepped up cooperation. He said Indian law enforcement agencies were "insulated" and were proud of their own technical capabilities and skeptical about the value of cooperation.

Narayanan said he recognized personally that it was time to move beyond the old paradigm that had limited cooperation.

¶16. (C) To make his point, Narayanan noted that state and federal authorities both had some leads before the Assam attack, but were unable to run them all down. The GOI had formed a Core Group, but they had been unable to find the individuals in the area who were suspected of involvement in the attack. When the attack did not take place as expected two weeks ago, law enforcement efforts had slackened. If the U.S. were to provide analysis of prior incidents, it should be focused on detecting patterns of attacks and providing information which could bolster the methods Indian law enforcement agencies use to deter and prevent attacks. Given the intelligence Indian agencies had about threats in Assam, what should they have done, he asked rhetorically. Narayanan was interested in the U.S. experience post-September 11 in preventing terrorist attacks, and wanted to understand specifically how the USG had used intelligence to thwart terrorist attacks in the U.S. and overseas.

AMBASSADOR: WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS CAN WE TAKE NOW?

¶17. (S) The Ambassador asked Narayanan specifically whether it would be possible for the GOI to share physical evidence, such as an IED or other blast-related items, with the USG and allow our agencies to process the device and provide the GOI with a forensic report. We would be able to provide a secure chain of custody. Narayanan was open to the suggestion and said this would be an opportunity to demonstrate to skeptical GOI agencies what they did not know. LEGAT Powers noted that the FBI had a large database regarding explosive devices and that processing a device found in the Indian attacks could provide information that would be useful to U.S. and Indian agencies. The Terrorist Explosive Device Analysis Center was a unique resource. Powers passed Narayanan a list of training opportunities the FBI had provided to Indian law enforcement agencies. ORA Minister Counselor Brown suggested that it would be most useful to be provided with physical evidence from more recent attacks. She also noted that the U.S. wanted all the information the GOI had that would prevent future attacks. Narayanan said the information

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developed from any physical evidence supplied to the USG should help prevent just such attacks. The "only thing" the GOI was interested in now was preemption.

¶18. (C) The Ambassador welcomed this offer and encouraged Narayanan to seek forward movement on counter-terrorism given its practical importance to India and the United States. Agencies at post will be separately contacting their counterparts to explore next steps to boost practical cooperation.

MULFORD